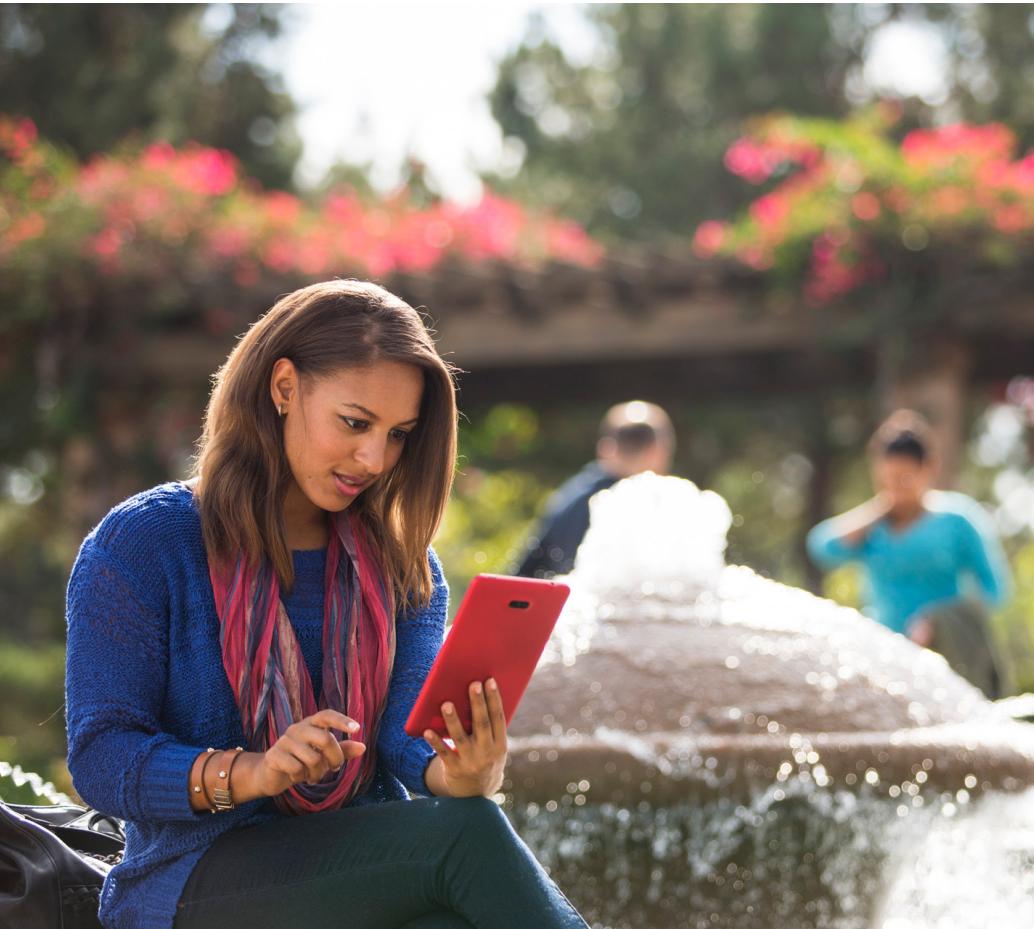# Quest®

University standardizes on Toad® for querying and reporting

The University of Alaska enables novice and expert users to easily connect to any data source for advanced querying and reporting with Toad® Data Point.

BUSINESS NEED

The University of Alaska needed a querying and reporting tool that would enable all users to easily run ad hoc queries and produce reports against multiple data sources to improve decision making.

SOLUTION

The university standardized on Toad® Data Point, a querying and reporting tool, because it supports highly complex queries, yet is easy enough for less technical staff to use. The university was able to streamline its information management operations and reduce the learning curve and financial burden of supporting multiple projects.

BENEFITS

- Enabled both novice and expert users to create queries and reports with ease, saving time and increasing productivity.

- Standardized on a single tool, reducing the learning curve and financial burden of supporting multiple products.

- Enabled the university to move forward with critical platform and Banner software upgrades without delay.

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- Information management

"The users who have started working with Toad Data Point love it. They know that the other user communities are going to be just as happy."

Patty Itchoak, Director of Electronic Student Services, University of Alaska

Established in 1917, the University of Alaska system now enrolls nearly 33,000 full- and part-time students and employs roughly 7,000 people. For a powerful database querying and reporting tool flexible enough to handle both novice and expert users, the University of Alaska turned to Quest®.

> "Our users have a wide range of technical skills. We have novice users who do not completely understand the underlying table structures, as well as experts who need to create highly complex queries. Toad Data Point is a tool that supports both."
>
> *Patty Itchoak, Director of Electronic Student Services, University of Alaska*

LOOKING FOR A NEW TOOL AFTER ORACLE ENDS SUPPORT FOR QUERY BUILDER 6I RUNTIME

The University of Alaska depended on Oracle Query Builder 6i Runtime for daily management reporting against its Oracle 8 database environment. In particular, the tool provided timely data about finances and student enrollment to deans, executives, the Board of Regents and state legislators; however, when Oracle stopped supporting both Oracle 8 and Query Builder 6i Runtime, it became difficult to maintain the university's ad hoc reporting repository.

The problem became even more pronounced as the University of Alaska began planning to move its primary student, finance and human resources information system (Banner) to Oracle 10. This transition required the university to find a querying and reporting tool to replace Oracle Query Builder.

Because the new tool would serve critical reporting functions across the university and become the new standard for the entire system, the University of Alaska assembled a team to collect requirements and conduct a thorough discovery. The team members included representatives of many of the groups that would be using the tool, including IT, Human Resources, Budget and Finance, Enrollment Management and the Office of Institutional Research.

A LONG LIST OF REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING EASE OF USE FOR BOTH EXPERT AND NOVICE USERS

The group put together a detailed list of 42 requirements. One key requirement was to enable users to run ad hoc queries and produce reports without working with metadata. In addition, the tool had to be able to create a wide range of reports, including enterprise-wide summaries of financial status, student enrollment and other university statistics. Plus, it had to be able to connect to multiple, diverse university database instances, offer a secure option for data access that would not compromise production data, and avoid any impact on database performance when queries were run.

A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE MARKET REVEALS A CLEAR CHOICE: TOAD DATA POINT.

The University of Alaska's discovery team reviewed a wide range of possible solutions, including business intelligence products. The team found that some of the tools were simple enough for novice users, but did not have the depth of functionality required for experts. Others were so complicated that the university's less technical users would not be able to use them. The tools also differed widely in their ability to connect to a variety of data sources and produce the wide range of reports the university needed.

The one tool that stood out was Toad Data Point from Quest. This multi-platform solution is built specifically for data-focused professionals who need direct access to data for querying and reporting. It comes with easy-to-use functions, including a streamlined user workflow, the ability to visualize table- and master-detail relationships, heterogeneous querying capabilities, advanced compare-and-sync functionality, and automation and scheduling features to improve productivity.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

SOFTWARE

Toad Data Point

Quest

USERS CAN CONNECT EASILY TO ANY DATA SOURCE.

With Toad Data Point, users can easily connect to any source where data resides, including Oracle, SQL Server, Sybase, DB2, Microsoft Access and Excel databases, as well as to ODBC sources like Teradata, Netezza and Informix.

"The web demos of Toad Data Point demonstrated that the tool could handle both our novice users and our database experts," said Patty Itchoak, Director of Electronic Student Services at the University of Alaska's Anchorage campus. "After reviewing Quest's response to our request for a proposal, we knew that the tool was going to meet our needs. It really aligned with what we wanted."

ENABLING BOTH NOVICES AND EXPERTS TO WRITE THE QUERIES THEY NEED

"Our users have a wide range of technical skills," stated Itchoak. "We have novice users who do not completely understand the underlying table structures, as well as experts who need to create highly complex queries. Toad Data Point is a tool that supports both."

The University of Alaska is just getting started with Toad Data Point, but has already received positive feedback from end users. "The users who have started working with Toad Data Point love it," reported Itchoak. "They're happy with the tool, and they're very excited about it. They know that the other user communities are going to be just as happy."

Much of the excitement for this solution stems from the fact that all users — regardless of experience with SQL — can now write well-formed queries, as well as connect to multiple database instances, easily view and understand data, share queries and reports, and export to Excel. And having Toad Data Point in place as the university's querying and reporting tool enabled it to move ahead with its implementation of Banner 8.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FROM EXPERTS

To help users get up to speed on Toad Data Point, the university purchased onsite training provided by Quest's Professional Services Organization (PSO). "The Quest PSO staff was very flexible in accommodating some changes we needed for our training," said Itchoak. "All the campuses were extremely pleased with the level of expertise that they brought. They answered all the questions that we had, and the users felt they got a lot out of their training."

ABOUT QUEST

At Quest, our purpose is to solve complex problems with simple solutions. We accomplish this with a philosophy focused on great products, great service and an overall goal of being simple to do business with. Our vision is to deliver technology that eliminates the need to choose between efficiency and effectiveness, which means you and your organization can spend less time on IT administration and more time on business innovation.

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